

Message Text

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PA-01 SS-15 USIA-06 /091 W
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R 242008Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5711
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 05963

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC, FR, PERP
SUBJ: FRANCE AND THE EC FOLLOWING THE FRENCH ELECTION

REF: BRUSSELS 4476

1. SUMMARY: EXCEPT FOR THOSE OF STRONGLY SOCIALIST ORIENTATION, MAJORITY OF EC COMMISSION AND PERMDEL OFFICIALS WITH WHOM MISSION HAS DISCUSSED FRENCH ELECTORAL RESULTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FRENCH ROLE IN EC HAVE: (A) WELCOMED THE ELECTORAL OUTCOME AND (B) SPECULATED THAT THE EC WILL CERTAINLY BE NO WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE THE ELECTION, AND ARGUABLY WILL BE BETTER OFF. THEY NOTE THAT, AT A MINIMUM, THE EC WILL NOW (I.E., AS SOON AS NEW GOF IS INSTALLED) BE ABLE TO RESUME DISCUSSION OF ISSUES WHICH HAD BEEN PUT ON THE SHELF UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION. BEYOND THAT, SEVERAL OFFICIALS THINK THERE IS
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A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT GISCARD, EMBOLDENED BY WHAT IS BEING WIDELY INTERPRETED HERE AS HIS PERSONAL ELECTORAL VICTORY, WILL FOLLOW HIS BASICALLY PRO-EUROPEAN INSTINCTS TO TRY TO DEVELOP WITH THE GERMANS A STRATEGY AIMED AT ACTIVELY PUSHING ECONOMIC AND MONETARY INTEGRATION WITHIN THE EC. A CONTESTED VIEW HOLDS THAT GISCARD, NOW THAT HE HAS SIZABLE, IDENTIFIABLE (UDF) BASE OF SUPPORT IN THE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (SEPARATE FROM THE BASICALLY ANTI-EUROPEAN GAULLISTS), WILL BE EMBOLDENED TO PUSH A "EUROPEAN STRATEGY" ACROSS A BROAD FRONT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE RESUMPTION OF COMMUNITY BUSINESS SHELVED FOR THE ELECTORAL PERIOD.

MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS ARE QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT FRANCE BEHAVED COMMENDABLY TOWARD ITS EC PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS DURING THE LONG PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD WHICH STRETCHED OVER MORE THAN A YEAR--E.G., FRANCE CONTINUED TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY AND, BY ITS LIGHTS, RESPONSIBLY IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND DID NOT AT ANY TIME EXPLICITLY REQUEST THAT CONTENTIOUS ISSUES BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION. SOURCES ACKNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER, THAT BY COMMON CONSENT, THE EC MOVED SLOWLY DURING THAT PERIOD ON SEVERAL SENSITIVE MATTERS WHICH MIGHT HAVE EMBARRASSED THE GOF IF PURSUED ACTIVELY BEFORE THE POLL. A CASE IN POINT IS EC ENLARGEMENT. COMMUNITY OFFICIALS NOTE THAT ALL ONE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN NOW IS THAT ENLARGEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFICULT TO BRING ABOUT UNDER A MITTERRAND GOVERNMENT; THAT THE ACCESSION OF SPAIN, PARTICULARLY, CONTINUES TO PRESENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR ANY FRENCH GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT, NONETHELESS, THE COMMUNITY WILL BE ABLE NOW TO PROCEED TO EXAMINE SERIOUSLY THE MORE DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF ENLARGEMENT, INCLUDING THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL, AGRICULTURE. THE SAME IS TRUE OF

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OTHER ISSUES THAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SET ASIDE--AS ONE SENIOR COMMISSION OFFICIAL REMARKED TO US, "WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT SUCH DOSSIERS WILL NOW BE TAKEN UP AGAIN, BUT BEYOND THAT, IT'S HARD TO SPECULATE." OBSERVERS GENERALLY BELIEVE THAT WITH FRENCH ELECTION OUT OF THE WAY, THE GOF WILL HAVE NO DIFFICULTY AGREEING TO ANY DATE FOR DIRECT ELECTION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO ITS PARTNERS.

3. NEW STEPS TOWARD ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION?

LOCAL OPINIONS DIFFER ON WHETHER GISCARD HAS A COHERENT, FULLY ELABORATED EUROPEAN STRATEGY AS SUCH. MOST DOUBT IT, ARGUING INSTEAD THAT GISCARD ONLY HAS PRO-EUROPE INSTINCTS WHICH HE MAY CHANNEL IN CERTAIN SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS WHICH HE CONSIDERS PROMISING. SEVERAL FRENCH NATIONALS AND GERMAN PERMDEL OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE SPOKE EXPECT SOME EARLY MOVE BY GISCARD TOWARD THE GERMANS TO CONCERT STRATEGY DESIGNED TO MOVE THE EC TOWARD ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION. RECALLING THAT THE FRENCH PRESIDENT URGED, IN FRANCO-GERMAN TALKS LAST AUTUMN, AN ENHANCED, PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION IN THE ECONOMIC/MONETARY SPHERE

TO SERVE AS GUIDE AND BEACON TO THEIR WEST EUROPEAN PARTNERS, THEY BELIEVE THAT WITH A MORE SOLID POLITICAL BASE GISCARD WILL RENEW THAT APPEAL TO THE GERMANS. ONE SENIOR COMMISSION OFFICIAL SPECULATED THAT A SERIES OF SUCH AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS ON A EUROPEAN PLANE COULD CONSTITUTE PART OF GISCARD'S STRATEGY FOR HIS OWN RE-ELECTION AS FRENCH PRESIDENT IN 1981.

4. LOCAL OBSERVERS' BELIEF THAT FRANCE WILL CONTINUE TO BE AT LEAST AS PRO-EUROPEAN AS GISCARD/BARRE HAVE BEEN, AND EVEN PERHAPS BECOME MORE ACTIVELY SO (ALONG LINES OF PARA 3 ABOVE), IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT GISCARD'S MINISTERIAL TEAM WILL, IN KEY ECONOMIC PORTFOLIOS,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 05963

LARGELY REFLECT GISCARDIAN AND UDF VIEWS RATHER THAN THOSE OF THE EXTREME WING OF THE RPR WHICH, AS NOTED ABOVE, TEND TO BE ANTI-EUROPEAN AND GENERALLY PROTECTIONIST. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT BARRE IS PERHAPS THE LEAST PROTECTIONIST-MINDED OF POTENTIAL PRIME MINISTERS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, AND CONSEQUENTLY MORE INCLINED THAN MOST TO WORK FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO MTN, LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT HOPES FOR A REASONABLY CONSTRUCTIVE FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TOKYO ROUND WOULD BE SERIOUSLY SET BACK ONLY IF GISCARD WERE TO GIVE THE RPR GREATER REPRESENTATION IN KEY MINISTRIES THAN NOW SEEMS LIKELY. AT THE SAME TIME, NONE CONTEST THE FACT THAT

THE FRENCH WILL REMAIN AT THE MORE PROTECTIONIST, LEAST
LIBERAL END OF THE EC MEMBER STATE SPECTRUM.

5. AS REGARDS ANOTHER SPECIFIC ISSUE OF INTEREST TO
THE U.S.--I.E., PROSPECTS FOR US-EURATOM RENEGOTIATION
OF SAFEGUARDS--COMMUNITY OBSERVERS THINK THAT CONCLUSION
OF FRENCH ELECTION HAS AT BEST REMOVED ONLY ONE CONSTRAINT
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TO FRANCE'S ADOPTING A CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE, CONSISTENT
WITH THAT OF THE OTHER EIGHT EC MEMBERS, TOWARD THE U.S.
REQUEST FOR RENEGOTIATION. THEY NOTE THAT THE SAME
OFFICIALS AS HERETOFORE WILL CONTINUE TO MAN THE RELEVANT
AGENCIES IN THE GOF AND DOUBT THAT BASIC FRENCH ATTITUDES
ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF RENEGOTIATION WILL CHANGE
READILY. OUR SOURCES NOTE THAT, IN ANY CASE, A MORE
CONSIDERED READING OF LIKELY FRENCH ACTIONS IN THIS AND
OTHER POLICY AREAS MUST AWAIT THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE
FRENCH CABINET, SINCE THE PRESENT CARETAKER REGIME WILL
NOT WISH TO BIND THE NEW GOVERNMENT BY TAKING DECISIONS
ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. MORRIS

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